

Lesson 4: Love Yourself

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[0:00] so thankful for the presence of God. I pray that this word is timely for us, and you leave here today with a new understanding and perspective on the plan that God has for you.

Matthew chapter 22, beginning verse 35. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of your heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself on these two commandments, hang all the law and the prophets. Amen.

Let's pray. Thank you, Jesus, God, for your presence that we felt so strongly in this prayer meeting today. God, I pray you continue to be with us as your words minister to us and goes forth.

[1:17] God, I pray, Lord, that it rests upon each one. God, help us see the value that you have in us, in your kingdom, God. I pray, Lord, that you touch every mind, every heart, every soul today, and that they would see your value that you have on them, the value you've placed on their life, the calling that they have, God.

I pray, Lord, that it's revealed to them in the name of Jesus. Amen. You may be seated. Jesus was tempted or tested by this Jewish lawyer that was trying to put Jesus in a bind.

But really, this attempt to trap Jesus in his words just gave Jesus the opportunity to speak some very important things. And so Jesus teaches that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

But we know he didn't stop there. Jesus goes on beyond that and gives us a second commandment that he says is just as great as the first, just equaling to the first.

And so the first commandment could not be told without mentioning the second. And the second commandment was this, thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. And so we will break that down tonight.

[2:26] What does that mean? What should we take from that? And so let's break that down in the word of God tonight. So first of all, one of the things that disciples of Jesus Christ need to grow to understand and learn is that there's power in God's word.

The scriptures we study that we hear taught week in and week out, they have layers upon layers. And like we've said and read in scripture that the word of God is spirit and life.

There's spirit and life in the words that we read in the Bible. And they're powerful words. And John chapter 5 verse 24 says, Verily, verily, I say to thee, he that heareth my words, Jesus speaking, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

So Jesus is saying that if you believe in God and hear my words, you can avoid being condemned of your sins and pass from death into eternal life. And in our lesson last week on salvation, we learned that Jesus has a baptism to give.

Okay. Jesus had a baptism to give. And then that's the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It's the Holy Spirit. And it's the baptism that baptizes our human spirit and allows us to be born again of the spirit. And we've read this in 1 Corinthians 15, 44 and 45.

[3:55] It's a son of natural body. We have a natural body and it's raised a spiritual body. There's a natural body and there's a spiritual body. And then verse 45, it says, so is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul and the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

The man, Christ Jesus, was made a quickening spirit, a strengthening spirit, the Holy Spirit of God. And through that, we have the opportunity of salvation.

We have to be baptized in the spirit, the baptism that Jesus has to give. And the powerful part about this is that that quickening spirit is not only just dwelling in us, but it's on the pages of this book, this Bible.

And it's not just on the pages of this Bible, but it's also in us. And so in John 6 and 63, it says, in the spirit that quickeneth, that quickening spirit, the flesh profiteth nothing, but the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.

And so we, if you back up and go to John 1 and 1, and I'm just building a foundation here because I'm taking us somewhere today. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

[5:03] And verse 14, and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. God's word was made flesh in the form of a man and literally God spoke to mankind directly.

Mankind had the opportunity to look upon the face of God in his expressed image in the man Christ Jesus and see his lips move and hear the voice of God literally.

And I'm telling you all this because I'm about to tell you something. You're going to hear a hard saying from Jesus. And what we're about to read, Jesus taught and said, it caused many disciples of Jesus Christ in that day to walk away and not follow Jesus anymore.

And so I'm just, I'm trying to build a foundation before we get there. With the understanding that the word of God was made flesh, let's read and understand.

John chapter 6, verse 53. John chapter 6, verse 53. And we'll read four verses. With the understanding that the word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us.

[6:17] John 6 and 53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him. In the beginning was the word of God, and the word was God, and the word, and God's word became flesh, and the flesh was the flesh of Jesus, and we are to eat his flesh.

And thank God it's, we're not being asked to literally eat the flesh of a man, but it's the word of God that we're being asked to eat.

Okay, and so we can understand that Jesus is teaching that we have to consume the word of God. We have to eat the word of God, the flesh, okay? And we understand that, but a lot of people then following Jesus didn't understand that, and a lot of disciples didn't get it.

[7:28] Okay, and John chapter 6, verse 66 through 68, from that time, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said unto the 12, Will you also go away?

Then Peter answered him, Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life. Disciples of Jesus Christ have to have the same attitude about the word of God as Peter did.

Who else can we go to? Where else can we, what else can we turn to in this life? What else can we lean on? What else can we try to consume in order to have what we need?

Jesus has the words of eternal life. Give me the word of God. Don't give me a self-help program. Don't give me counseling of any other kind. Let me start in the word of God.

Give me the word of God. Let me consume the word of God. Give me the flesh of Jesus to eat because I want eternal life. And I know that the word of God is spirit and life.

[8:33] And I will need to consume the word of God. And so we're talking about the greatest commandments in that word that we are to consume.

And so when Jesus says, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments saying all the law of prophets, we have to understand that this is a powerful, important topic that will bring eternal life if we can have ears to hear and a submitted attitude towards God's word.

If we understand that truly this is the word of God and that we are to consume it and it's the words that will give us eternal life and then inside this word of God of all the scriptures and all the pages of this book and all the teachings and all the wisdom of this book of the word of God that's in our hands that there's boiled down to two greatest commandments or the greatest commandments.

Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself. Then we should pay attention to that. If that's, if they're saying that, if God's saying that this is the two greatest commandments and all this, the power of this word of God, then we need to pay attention

to that.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself was that second one that's equal unto the first. And so let's, let's look at this and break this down. We've broken, already broken down the first commandment, how it leads us to salvation.

[10:03] Let's look at the second commandment. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And there's two things here.

The obvious one is that we're commanded to love our neighbors. But as I've said before, if we really look at this commandment built into it, inherently, it means we are to love ourselves.

So let's start here and look at what it means biblically to love ourselves. Our creation was intentional by God. Okay?

That's the first thing we need to understand. Our creation, the creation of us, say the creation of me, I was intentional by God. We were not created by accident.

There is no big bang. Okay? God had a plan. God created us. Knowing this should lead us to ask a couple questions. How does God see us?

[11:02] We should see ourselves through the eyes of our creator, shouldn't we? He created us, and it wasn't an accident. So then, how does God see us?

For what purpose have we been created? If we understand that we were intentionally created, we should also understand that we have, there's an intentional purpose involved in that, in our creation. It can be hard for us to understand that God created us for eternal life. Knowing that Adam would fail separating humanity from God, and knowing he, God knowing that he would have to robe himself in flesh and suffer on a cross and conquer death to save humanity and bring us back to himself.

That can be hard to understand. It can be hard to comprehend. It can be hard to understand that God created us in his own image. But he did.

In Genesis 1 and 27, it says, So God created man in his own image, and the image of God created he him. Male and female created he them. Not only were we created to be in the image of God, we were created to live for eternity.

[12:10] Titus 1 and 2, In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Before the world began, before he created the world, we were promised eternal life.

That's hard to understand. Before he created the world, before he created us, the plan was that we would have eternal life. We were the plan. We were the plan.

And the plan was for us to have eternal life. Before Genesis 1 and 1, where it says, in the beginning, God created the heavens and earth. Before that, the intent and promise of God was to create us to be in his image and to live for eternity.

Before the world began, we were promised the hope of eternal life. Before the world began, we were the plan of God to be created in his image and to be able to live with him forever. And before the world began, God knew mankind would fail him.

God was not caught off guard by what Adam and Eve did. He was not surprised by that. That was no surprise to him. He didn't have to come up with plan B all of a sudden.

[13:23] We need to understand that the fall of mankind through Adam was not a surprise to God. God was not caught off guard. He knew it. And he had accounted for it before the world began, before he even created man.

He already accounted for it. It was all part of his plan before he even created anything. Before God formed Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathed eternal life in his nostrils, God already had a plan of salvation worked out that would require him to put on humanity himself and die for our redemption to purchase us back.

Before he created us, he already knew. He already knew what it was going to cost him. And he already made up his mind that he was willing to pay the price for us to purchase us back with his own blood.

1 Peter 1, verse 18-20. For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversations received by tradition from your fathers, verse 19, we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Verse 20, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. It was foreordained before the foundations of the world and is now coming to

fruition in these last days for us.

[14:46] God's plan goes even further. God's plan before the world began did not stop at our salvation. But in addition, his plan is for us to have a holy calling according to his own purpose and grace.

It's found in 2 Timothy, verse 1, 9-11. Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Verse 11, whereunto I am appointed a preacher and apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. This is Paul telling Timothy that we were created to be saved by a Savior and to have the same purpose of our Savior, which is to save.

He's a Savior. There's only one, we learned about it last week, there's only one Savior. He's our Savior. And disciples of Jesus Christ can be sure that God created them for his own purpose and grace and plan to redeem them before the world began that should give us a lot of faith and encouragement, but should also cause us to value ourselves in the kingdom of God.

Value yourself. You are of great value to God. Value yourself. You come to the realization that you are a part of a greater plan.

[16:26] Before the foundations of the world, you are a part of a great plan. Value yourself. Love yourself. You have been saved by the sacrifice Jesus made and he has placed you and placed upon you a holy calling.

I hope you get what I'm trying to say here today. I hope you get what the word of God is showing us. Before God created the world, he knew he was going to create you to have a holy purpose.

and he even created you in his own image that he came in to do his part in that same holy purpose, stepping off his throne in glory, putting on flesh, coming and dying on a cross.

He did his part in the same holy purpose and now we have a part of the same holy purpose he had. It's deep. If you think about it, that's deep. Before the world began, before there was dust to create man out of.

It was his plan to create us in his image and to give us part of the holy purpose that he had. We have to understand that we're the body of Christ.

[17:35] So 1 Corinthians chapter 12 covers the body of Christ in great detail. And I want to just make a couple points from scripture in that chapter. Each individual disciple of Jesus Christ is a particular member of the body which Jesus is the head.

Okay? So we're the body, Jesus is the head. And that's significant thing to understand because it shows the extreme importance of each individual disciple of Jesus Christ.

Collectively together we make a functioning body. Okay? The body of Christ. If we were all fingers would we be a body?

No, because where would the feet be? Right? Where would be the hands that the fingers attach to? But just like a natural body, the body of Christ has to have all these different members individual to make up the body.

1 Corinthians 12 and 12. For as the body is one and hath many members and all the members of that one body being many are one body.

[18:45] So also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body. Whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free and have been all made to drink into one spirit.

For the body is not one member but many. Okay? 1 Corinthians 12 18 through 20. But now have God set the members of every one of them in the body as it has pleased him.

And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members yet one body? Verse 27. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.

So disciples of Jesus Christ make up individual members in particular of the body of Christ. with Christ being the head of the body. We can't overlook the mention that God set every one of us in the body as it has pleased him.

It pleases God for us to answer our call to be that particular member of his holy body. It pleases God if we do that.

[19:56] It pleases God if we take our place in our calling to be that particular member in the body. Ephesians 4 15 and 16 but speaking the truth in love may grow up into him all things which is the head even Christ verse 16 from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that

which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part make it increase of the body unto the edifying of itself and love.

okay so as individual members of the body we should be in submission to and should be used by the head which is Christ for his purposes.

Our purposes in this moment is to increase the body through edification and in love that's what it's saying in other words reaching the other members of the body that have not yet joined the body yet. There's more members of the body that need to join the body and doing that through love. Love your neighbor as thyself.

We know we're created by God with a plan and a purpose in mind. We know that we are the body of Christ that should be led by Christ Jesus the head of the body.

[21:17] So how are we led by Jesus Christ the head of the body? Romans 8 9 but ye are not in the! so be that the spirit of God dwell in you now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he's not of his so we have to have the Holy Ghost we have to have the spirit of God which is the spirit of Christ all the same one spirit and then we're his but it doesn't stop there it goes on there and having the Holy Ghost we must!

be led by the Holy Ghost so this is in Romans 8 and 14 a few verses later for as many are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God so that's how it's done the way the body is led is through the spirit of God through the spirit of Christ he's the head and he leads the body we're the hands we're the feet he's leading us through his spirit so we have to have the spirit okay and so loving ourselves as the body of Christ we should be holy because God is holy and so!

body of Christ as the body of Christ we should also present ourselves holy and acceptable unto God verse Peter 1 and 16 because it is written be holy for I am holy God said you need to be holy because I'm holy you're the body I'm the head I'm holy so you need to be holy disciples of Jesus Christ need to understand that the thing that separated in the beginning separated humanity from God was unholiness because God is holy and it requires righteousness and holiness to be on good terms with God we obtain purification through the salvation process but that does not relieve our continued responsibility to pursue righteousness and holiness that's something that has to be continued and pursued which as we've studied is repentance turning away from the sinful life we once lived and having our sins washed away through baptism the bible says in hebrews chapter 12 verse 14 follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the lord and so we have to have peace with all men and holiness otherwise we're not going to see

God peace is how we get along with other people we have to have peace peace we have to have peace we're members of the body especially other members of the body we have to have peace with them and the people that we're trying to reach we need to have peace with them peace is how we get along with men peace with all men but holiness is how we get along with God because God is holy we have to have holiness we have to be separated for his purpose we have to live a separated life from the world without peace with all men and holiness with God without both together we're not going to be able to see the Lord the Bible says so we're asked to be holy and royal priests unto God despite our reality that we're still in the flesh we're still in the flesh that's our reality we carry flesh!

and spirit at the same time it's a battle between flesh and spirit Romans 6 and 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity even so now yield your members servants to righteousness and unto holiness so in the scripture Paul's telling us that our fleshliness is compared to an infirmity an illness a sickness a disease in the body and he goes on to say that we we have previously in our lives and maybe to some degree still have allowed our flesh to control our actions that sickly diseased body to control our actions to that sickly diseased flesh to control our actions to things that were unrighteous and unholy those things controlled us and we yielded to it we've yielded to the flesh we've allowed the flesh to control now he's saying that we have to yield ourselves now to the things to the righteousness just like we used to yield to the flesh we need to yield to the spirit so now we should not yield to the flesh and allow our flesh to dictate our actions and we should instead yield ourselves to be servants only to righteousness and holiness disciples of

[26:11] Jesus Christ have to recognize that and understand that we are in the flesh here in the flesh we are a house for spiritual things such as our soul as studied previously and we can refer to ourselves as a temple or a vessel the Bible refers to us as temples and vessels for us that have

experienced salvation and have the baptism of the spirit we house the spirit of God within us 1 Corinthians 3 16 know you not that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you and if any man defiles the temple of God God will destroy him for the temple of God is to be holy and you're the temple along with understanding that we're the temple of God we should respect that temple and not defile it our body needs to be loved and respected because it's the temple of God how would you treat the temple of

God a physical temple of God if it was something that you'd want to take care of it you'd want it to be presented well you'd want it to be kept up with you'd want it to be maintained for the purposes that it had to be the temple of God so in other words we need to start thinking about ourselves and our bodies as the actual dwelling place of God because we are and we're at risk of losing our salvation if we defile ourselves if you defile your body you're defiling the temple of God and God will destroy you the Bible says so it takes holiness to ensure we're not defiling ourselves we're not only the temple we're not only a temple that is to house the spirit of God but we are called to be holy priests that offer sacrifices in other words we have a job to do first Peter chapter two verse five ye also are lively stones are built up a spiritual house a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to

God by Jesus Christ to be built! up a! spiritual! to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices that God would accept let's all stand disciples of Jesus Christ understand that we are not to just experience salvation and become a temple for the spirit of God but also that we have priestly duties and that we are to serve others see the problem we have in Christianity in general is that people come around they get in their mind that they want to love God with all their heart soul and mind they pick up the word and they study it and they find maybe Acts 2 38 they find salvation like we've learned because if you love God with all your heart soul and mind you will find salvation it will lead you to salvation it will get you in the door so to speak right but then that's only the half of it because there's the second commandment but people don't understand or realize that and so they stop there at salvation and then it's like what now and they just try to maintain and then it just becomes battling storm after storm in their lives and just dealing with all the things in their lives and they're focused on just their lives and they're not really moving forward or growing in

God and they're in this stale condition because they've just they've basically just experienced salvation and then they don't know what's next but we have to be led of the spirit we have to be a holy priesthood that offers up spiritual sacrifices so disciples of Jesus Christ understand that we are not just to experience salvation and become a temple of the spirit of God but we also have priestly duties and that we're to serve others 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9 we are a chosen generation a royal priesthood an holy nation a peculiar people that you should show forth the praises of him who have called you out of darkness into his marvelous light furthermore we have to understand that we are peculiar people and that doesn't mean strange or weird people but the meaning peculiar in this it means separated for purpose understand all these things that we can see why

Jesus says we should love our neighbors as ourselves obviously indicating that we should love ourselves it's almost needless to say we should take care of ourselves and ensure we are a holy dwelling place as a temple of God and as the representatives and ambassadors of salvation to others we carry the flag to be the image the body of Christ when people see us they should see Jesus God so we should take care of ourselves we should present ourselves in that way God's word is powerful and we were created in the image of God our words are powerful too so I want us to repeat some things out loud before we leave tonight so I really want us to get this I really want you to get this in your heart in your spirit in your mind I need you to understand this you need to change your perspective on who you are you need to change your understanding your thoughts about what value you bring to the kingdom of

[31 : 57] God okay so let's repeat I was created in the image of God I am of great value to God God purchased!

me with his own blood I am the body of Christ I am the temple of the Lord I am a spiritual house I have a holy calling I am a holy priest I belong to God's royal priesthood as a priest I have priestly duties I am to offer spiritual sacrifices spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God I am called out of darkness I am called into the light I will praise the Lord let's do that right now let's praise the Lord